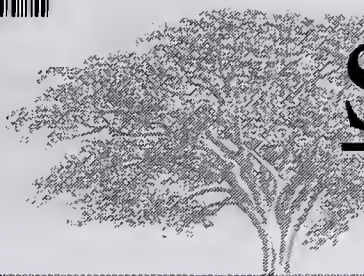




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# Sheffield TIMES

New Senior Center  
programs for seniors  
and students, page 9

Community News for Sheffield & Ashley Falls, MA SECOND GENERATION Vol. XI, Issue III **January/February 2012**

## BROADBAND REACHES MORE OF SHEFFIELD

Nine years after an Adelphia Communications Corp. spokesperson incorrectly assured the *Sheffield Times* that "100 percent" of Sheffield had access to cable, many unserved parts of town are finally seeing the cable guys on their roads.

In 2006, Adelphia went bankrupt, two of its officers were sentenced to prison for securities violations, and its assets were sold. Time Warner Cable bought the contract for the Sheffield area. It did not promise to provide cable to 100 percent of Sheffield, said a Time Warner spokesperson.

Since then, the town has been negotiating with Time Warner Cable to expand coverage.

Sheffield has been considered "underserved" by the state—that is, less than 50

percent of residents have broadband access. For years, people living in large parts of Sheffield, such as along Barnum and Silver streets in the south and Hulett Hill Rd. in the east, have had to rely on satellite dishes to get TV programming and on dial-up or satellite modems to get Internet access.

Dial-up connections supply only a tiny "pipe" for data to flow through, far too slow for image-rich websites and video. Satellite hookups allow more data to flow, but still don't provide as broad a band as a cable connection. DSL, available for a few years in parts of Sheffield near the Verizon switching station at the south end of the town green, is generally faster, and cable—coaxial or fiber optic—is faster still. With a cable connection, it's possible to get streaming video. Such connections are the norm in

much of the country—and are crucial for people in rural areas who want to telecommute or set up Internet-based businesses.

Time Warner Cable didn't seek to expand coverage until 2009, after the town showed that scores of households were interested in becoming customers—what's called "demand aggregation."

In 2008, the town sent out a survey to residents who weren't cable customers asking about their interest, following up with another inquiry to make sure the response was as complete as possible. Time Warner Cable then worked with the town to develop a list of likely customers, a process that took many months. The town asked for a steady build-out of the extended service. Time Warner Cable said it would complete the project by March 2013, according to a company spokesperson.

By mid-December, more than a year ahead of schedule, Time Warner has finished the project, with 15 miles of roadway newly wired, making coverage available to 111 additional properties.

That still doesn't mean that everyone in Sheffield will have access to cable. Not every road has been wired. And people whose houses are far off the road must pay for the cable past the first 250 feet. (If you are in such a situation, contact Time Warner Cable to get an estimate of the costs.)

Such charges could change in the next cable contract, which is due to start in 2013. Sheffield is part of the Five Town

*Continued on page 3*



**Going back in time, page 4.** Lynn H. Wood unravels the history of Maple Shade Farm, which straddles the intersection of Lime Kiln Rd. and the "Twelfth Massachusetts Turnpike," now the Sheffield-Egremont Rd.

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## Sheffield TIMES

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*If we missed thanking you here, we'll catch you in the next issue.  
If you haven't sent in your contribution, do it now! See page 23.*

## THREE MORE WAYS TO SUPPORT THE SHEFFIELD TIMES YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

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**March/April  
issue deadline:  
February 15**

## BROADBAND IN SHEFFIELD, continued from page 1

Cable Advisory Committee, along with Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox and Stockbridge. The committee has had a couple of preliminary meetings with Time Warner Cable. While the committee has jurisdiction only over television access, the same cable that brings TV programming allows fast Internet access (with the appropriate equipment and for an extra monthly fee).

Sheffield and the other towns in the committee are "in the catbird seat" for negotiating a new cable contract, says Judy Dumont, director of the Massachusetts Broadband Institute. That's because MBI is setting up a fiber-optic network—MassBroadband 123—that will bring broadband to all towns in the state. The network will be "open" and accessible to any company, which should increase competition.

Established by Gov. Deval Patrick

in 2008 and funded by state bonds and federal stimulus money, MBI is aiming to complete the network by 2013, by which time it will have laid 1,100 miles of new fiber optic cable along more than 33,000 utility poles. The "123" in "MassBroadband 123" refers to the 123 underserved towns in the state.

The goal for this phase of the project is to wire the "middle mile," linking "community anchor institutions" in each town. The quality of the signal will equal what's available in Boston, Dumont says.

In Sheffield, the anchors are Town Hall, the police and fire stations, the library and the Southern Berkshire Regional School District. The town had wanted the Senior Center included on the list, but each town could have only a limited number of anchors.

For the "last mile," getting connections to individual homes, MBI is looking to

towns and private ventures. For instance, the town of Mt. Washington is itself trying to get cable to everyone in that small town. In Tyringham, a company called WiSpring is using a fire tower on Mt. Wilcox to connect residents wirelessly.

"We are working with towns and service providers to develop last-mile solutions that fit the needs of the communities," says Dumont, who points out that the technology in this area is changing quickly. "With a low-cost fiber-optic backbone, prices should become more competitive."

Private companies such as Time Warner Cable have so far been waiting to see what happens. In general, Dumont says, the big cable companies have been reluctant to depart from their current business model, which depends on using their own cable. But she thinks they'll eventually take advantage of the MassBroadband 123 network's open-access system.

Meanwhile, the Federal Communications Commission and other government agencies—including MBI—are looking for ways to "close the digital divide" between affluent and less affluent Americans.

"Studies have shown that nationwide, 30 percent of those with access don't subscribe," said Dumont. "They're generally the elderly, the disabled, the low income."

One approach to closing the gap is to provide low-cost Internet access to economically disadvantaged homes, which the FCC defines as those with children eligible for the school free lunch programs. Various corporations have pledged low-cost equipment, software and training to increase digital literacy.

—Andrea Scott

### BRADFORD PAINTINGS ON VIEW AT OLD PARISH

Paintings of The Rev. James Bradford, fourth minister of the First Congregational (Old Parish) Church, and his wife, Margaret Flint Bradford, now hang in the church's narthex, or entryway, courtesy of the Sheffield Historical Society.

The paintings, completed in 1847 by "N. Cook" descended through a number of the members of the Bradford family and for a time hung in the Bradford House on Main St., just a few doors down from the church's sanctuary. James Bradford served as minister of Old Parish Church from 1813 to 1852 and was also, unofficially, the town historian. His pastorate is the longest in the 276-year history of the church. When Bradford began his ministry in 1813, the church had 85 members. When he left, it had grown to 241.

The paintings, three by four feet in dimension, were just restored by the Roslyn Preservation Corp. of New York, a not-for-profit restoration fund. Roslyn offered them to the Sheffield Historical Society, which, in turn, voted to give them to the church on permanent loan so they might be appreciated by the church and town. The Church has placed them in its newly refinished narthex.

—John Wightman

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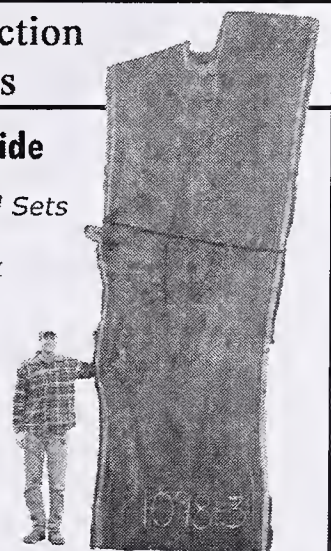
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### AN ADVENTURE THAT TOOK TWO HUNDRED YEARS

*In December, the Sheffield and Egremont Land Trusts announced that they'd helped the Delmolino family protect Maple Shade Farm on Sheffield-Egremont Rd. working with the Commonwealth's Agricultural Preservation Restriction program and Div. of Fisheries and Wildlife. This is the story of how the title researcher cleared up the boundaries to that farm to help make that possible.*

The work began as a standard title-research project, to discover descriptions of boundary lines between Maple Shade Farm and abutting neighbors to the south. It became an adventure through some of the oldest books in the Southern Berkshire District Registry of Deeds in Great Barrington and original Wills from the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries at Berkshire Family and Probate Court in Pittsfield.

The old leather-bound books at the Registry contain documents written by men who lived as long as 225 years ago, and they turned out to provide the best information. Laced with still-familiar details of the land, they would provide a view on earlier neighborhoods and institutions, as well as glimpses of personalities and their problems and hopes as they shaped, parcel by parcel, what we recognize as Sheffield farms today.

Distributions in Wills at the Probate Court contained "metes-and-bounds" descriptions—running prose describing

a parcel's boundaries as if you were walking all around the property—which provided a rough idea of how the abutting parcels fit together.

The usual way to research a title is methodical, with the most current deed providing information that allows the preceding deed to be found, and so on back in time. Deeds now must include detailed descriptions or note specific plans and include a reference for how the seller got the property. Not so in the past. The researcher must often go back as far as the 1830s before finding a metes-and-bounds description and discover how the property changed hands. In such instances, the researcher must turn to old atlases to find out about property owners in the area, the sketching of likely properties in the right area and time period and just plain instinct.

Where Maple Shade Farm now stands was more wilderness than not until about 1802, when the Twelfth Massachusetts Turnpike (now Sheffield-Egremont Rd.) was built to connect the village of South Egremont to what is now West Rd. Once the Turnpike was completed and parcels were conveyed referencing it, travel through the books in the Registry became easier until around the 1860s, when descriptions began to be composed just of references to abutting neighbors. Those descriptions were comprehensible only as long as there were people who knew the neighborhood of the 1860s.

In these earlier times, land and people were related, quite literally. In 1793, Silas Kellogg, who may have been the father of the first of three Ephraim Kelloggs, was a member of the three-man committee set up by the inhabitants of the Town of Sheffield to sell "Ministry lots." These sales helped support the Ministry in Sheffield. Such lots were sold to John Saxton, Richard Jacobs and Ephraim Kellogg, among others, and portions of these three lots appear to have eventually made their way into Maple Shade Farm.

Elisha Kellogg, Ephraim's brother, married Jane "Suxton," probably a relative of John Saxton. Richard Jacobs' wife was Susannah Kellogg. Thankful, wife of Benjamin Franklin Holmes, was the daughter of Richard Jacobs, blacksmith. The "Jacobs' and others" blacksmith shop appears to have been located south of Maple Shade Farm and west of the Twelfth Massachusetts Turnpike.

Details of the land itself sometimes appeared in the descriptions. For example, "the deep hole" was mentioned in the description of a parcel on the south side of Lime Kiln Rd. and west of Sheffield-Egremont Rd. in a distribution of the estate of Richard Jacobs in 1809. Over 200 years later, you'd still watch your step if hiking there. Streams that now meander through the fields were once part of the water system that powered saw mills that are documented in deeds and Wills as having been owned by groups of men, each holding a percentage of ownership.

Other reference points were created by the people who lived there. J.M. Smith's garden appears in more than one deed description. J.M. would have been amazed to discover that his garden was to be such a pathfinder, still visible (though



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unmarked) on Sheffield Assessors' Map #29.

Across the road from the clamor of the anvil and the hazy heat of the Jacobs' smithy was, by the time of Ephraim Kellogg's death, the one-acre Kellogg Quarry. The front door to its workshop is set out in the metes-and-bounds description written after Ephraim died in 1818. You can still see the results of quarrying on the faces of stones to the east side of the Turnpike, not far from that door. When the quarry was working, the roads were dirt, subject to snow and ice in winter and to mud in spring. Would we have seen horses or oxen pulling sleds for moving stone? Would we have heard the whistle of a nearby train?

Ephraim Kellogg also owned a quarter part of a sawmill "in Company with Abijah Curtiss and others." Would we have heard the whoosh of water wheels, the rattle of wagons heavy with timber, the shouts of "gee-haw!" from men urging their animals to work harder?

The stories and philosophies of these people seep out in quiet phrases, document by document. In his hand-written Will of about 1809, Richard Jacobs began by recognizing his impending death as his "restoration to eternal life." He expressed his gratitude for the good fortune he had had in his life as "the smiles of kind providence." In his daughter Thankful's deed to Silas Smith, she refers to the property she inherited "from our dear ... father."

Ephraim Kellogg left at his death in around 1818 four sons and five daughters. His property was divided among his four sons. One son, Donney (also known as Doney or Danny), may have settled in New York State, but by the time of his father's death, his whereabouts were unknown. Two of his brothers paid off his debts to their father's estate and received part of Donney's distribution.

Around 1812, Silas Smith had begun to assemble a farm, much of which remains intact in what we know as Maple Shade Farm. Thankful, daughter of Jacobs and wife of Holmes, conveyed a portion of her inherited land to Smith. Smith added property from Deputy Sheriff Albert A. Root, Jasper Saxton, Asher Saxton, Amos Foot (one-quarter acre at the intersection of the Twelfth Massachusetts Turnpike and what is now Lime Kiln Rd.), Abijah Curtiss and possibly others.

Silas Smith's farm eventually grew to about 150 acres. But by the middle of the 1800s, there were signs in the documents that Silas Smith was having financial problems. On Oct. 24, 1857, the farm, assembled parcel by parcel, went to other hands.

As the farm grew, general descriptions of Smith's larger farm replaced detailed descriptions of its smaller parts. Neighbors, who not only knew each other but often were relatives, worked out boundaries without benefit of plans or maps. Meanwhile, time took a toll on boundaries that depended on, for example, streams or trees or gardens.

When my two-hundred-year adventure at the Registry of Deeds and Probate Court was substantially complete and the surveyors had done their work on the ground, there remained a

parcel of approximately one acre that defied identification, leaving its ownership uncertain. Once again, neighborly neighbors worked together to set a common boundary, this time in an area where, not surprisingly, a stream has been carving out a changing path for generations.

Documents recently recorded in the Registry of Deeds reveal the clear vision of Barbara Delmolino, the current steward of Maple Shade Farm: approximately 30 acres of her farm have been conveyed to the Sheffield Land Trust, awaiting transfer to the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, and another 59 acres or so have been placed under an Agricultural Preservation Restriction, protected in perpetuity.

Barbara's name has now been woven into the documented fabric of the land itself, and when we and future generations ride along the old Twelfth Massachusetts Turnpike through Maple Shade Farm, we will appreciate the gift she has given.

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On March 3 at 7:30pm: Matching Orange. This trio from Boston uses guitar, mandolin, piano and fiddle to play traditional music from around the world—Ireland, Scotland, Quebec, Appalachia, New England, Cape Breton and elsewhere. [www.matchingorange.com](http://www.matchingorange.com).

Historic Dewey Hall is the stone building next to the Post Office in Sheffield. Light refreshments are available. Suggested donation at the door is \$10 for members, \$15 for nonmembers. [www.DeweyHall.com](http://www.DeweyHall.com).

## RELIGIOUS SERVICES

### ASHLEY FALLS

**Greenwoods Community Church** (non-denominational), 355 Clayton Rd. 229-8560; parsonage (860) 824-7442. Sunday: 9:30am Sunday School (ages 3-adult); 10:30am Worship Service, nursery care provided. Rev. Edward M. Eastman Jr., Pastor

**Trinity Methodist (United Methodist)**, 1156 Ashley Falls Rd. Sunday: 11am Service. Ken Phesay.

### EGREMONT

**First Congregational Church of South Egremont**, 34 Main St. 528-2209; parsonage 644-6419; pastor's cell (413) 883-1116. Sunday Worship: 10am. Rev. Peter Henderson.

### GREAT BARRINGTON

**Congregation Ahavath Shalom** (reconstructionist), North St. 528-4197. Friday, 8pm & Saturday, 10am. Services not held every week. Schedules are updated on answering machine

**Hevreh of Southern Berkshire**, 270 State Rd. 528-6378. Friday: 7:30pm Shabbat Service. Saturday: 10am Shabbat service & Torah study. Rabbi Deborah Zecher, Associate Rabbi Ari Rosenberg

### SHEFFIELD

**Christ Church Episcopal & Trinity Lutheran**, 180 Main St. 229-8811. Sunday: 8am & 10am Holy Eucharist; 10am Sunday School & child care; Thursday: 10am Holy Eucharist & Healing. Rev. Anne Ryder

**Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses**, Route 7 & Kellogg Rd. 229-8649. The public is welcome. **Old Parish** (United Church of Christ), 125 Main St. 229-8173. Sunday: 10am Worship (summer hours). Rev. Jill Graham, Pastor

**Our Lady of the Valley (Catholic)**, Maple Ave. 229-3028. Saturday: 4:00pm Mass; Sunday: Sheffield 7:30am, 9am Masses; Mill River 10:30 Mass. Rev. Bruce Teague

**Sheffield Chapel (non-denominational)**, 1970 N. Main St. 528-2911, [www.sheffieldchapel.org](http://www.sheffieldchapel.org). Sunday: 10:45am Worship, 9:30am Sunday School for all ages. Wed.: Group Prayer Time 7pm. Pastor: Corey McLaughlin



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## OLD PARISH CHURCH

**Sharing stories.** Old Parish Church will host the "Walk, Sister, Walk!" tour on Jan. 6, with a light dinner at 6pm and a program at 7pm, followed by conversation and dessert. "Walk, Sister, Walk!" is a presentation by four women "peace builders." During the month of January, they will travel throughout Massachusetts to share their stories of personal resilience and community transformation in the midst of natural disasters, violence and economic dislocation.

Participating are Elena Huegel, founder of the Shalom Center, a peace and environmental educational camp in Central Chile; Carolina Fernández, a community development consultant; Carrie Prestwood-Taylor, who has worked at the Shalom Center; and Débora Martínez of Chile, a staff person at the Shalom Center and the musical director for "Walk, Sister, Walk!"

For more information or to RSVP, call 229-8173 or email [oldparishsheffield@verizon.net](mailto:oldparishsheffield@verizon.net) —The Rev. Jill Graham



Food Program volunteers pack boxes in December: Phyllis Joyce, Nancy Smith, Dennis Staropoli, Kathy Posey, Joan Hotaling. Below: Scouts help too.

## FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Thank you for thinking of your neighbors. As ever, local support for Sheffield's Food Program has been constant and at times overwhelming. Just recently Berkshire Bank gave us a \$1,000 check, which goes a long way toward buying the meats and other foods we do buy. We are also grateful the bank is willing to have a barrel in its lobby to make it convenient for people to drop off food.

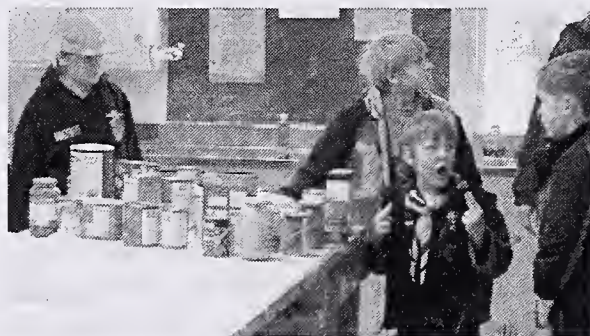
Salisbury Bank gave a large donation, too. They offered a \$5 gift to local food banks for each account transferred to online banking and divided the proceeds among the food banks served by their branches.

Kare Bear Golf Tournament included us in its collection of food during the summer and also sent a check.

The Scouts, 4H and the schools have been collecting food for us. Local stores give us day-old bread and produce.

Kiwanis gives us Thanksgiving and Christmas turkeys, potatoes, and carrots or onions. NASCAR Dave MacMillan's Sunday in the Country program gives us cases of food for Christmas dinner.

This summer the Sheffield Food Assistance Program chose to limit its scope to residents of the five towns of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District. If you know of anyone who would like our help, call Marcia Brolli, Phyllis Joyce or Lois Levinsohn.



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## LIBRARY NEWS & EVENTS

**Scrabble for kids.** We are starting a children's Scrabble group in January. Call 229-7004 for information. Lesley will be leading the group in the fun!

**Book club titles.** The Library's book club meets every month. The books being discussed: Feb. 2, *Rabbit Run* by John Updike; Mar. 1, *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jupha Lahiri; April 5, *State of Wonder* by Ann Patchett. The club meets at 1pm.

**How to use your new e-reader.** Get a Kindle or Nook or iPad as a present? Learn how the library can be at your fingertips 24/7 and how to download e-books for free in the comfort of your living room. Kathy Dean explains, Jan. 20 at 7pm.

**Book discussion.** "A World of International Literature: Bringing Foreign Fiction Home," Fri., Jan. 27, 7pm. Mitja Orthofer talks about contemporary fiction from around the world and the resources that are bringing it closer to home. Orthofer has been reviewing books and expounding on the international literary scene at the Complete Review ([www.complete-review.com](http://www.complete-review.com)) and its Literary Saloon blog since 1999. He was a founder of the site, which has some 2,800 titles under review. Orthofer's essays and reviews have also appeared in publications ranging from *Le Monde* to *World Literature Today*. His new book, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary World*



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SAT. 10-5, SUN 2-5; MON. CLOSED

*Fiction*, is being published by Columbia University Press.

**Book discussion.** "Death in Shorts: Women Writing the Mystery Short Story" with Leslie Wheeler and company, on March 6, 7-9pm.

**CDs for kids.** We are starting a collection of music CDs for young children. On order are Marlo Thomas's "Free To be You and Me," Johnny Cash and Pete Seeger. We welcome suggestions for other titles we should consider adding.

## RECOMMENDED READING

**Dignifying Dementia**, by Elizabeth Tierney (Oak Tree Press, Cork Ireland, 2011) *Dignifying Dementia* is the story of the 10-year struggle of Jim and Elizabeth Tierney with Lewy Body dementia, a disease akin to Alzheimer's that attacked Jim when he was in his 60s. Most importantly it is a love story. But it is also the story of a disease and how it affects those who provide care.

Jim was an educator, an articulate professional. Elizabeth was also an educator. In a second marriage for both of them, they cherished life, loved laughter and supported each other. They had known each other for 30 years, had been married for 25. Part of the time they lived in Manhattan, part of the time in the Berkshires,

part of the time in Hilton Head. True to Jim's heritage, they had lived for six years in Ireland. They enjoyed music and the theater, but were happiest when they were together doing nothing.

They first learned about the dementia when Jim was in the hospital suffering from rectal bleeding. According to Elizabeth, the surgeon told her that diagnosis abruptly and walked away, not giving her an opportunity to ask questions. From then on, the progress of the disease was slow, but unforgiving. Gradually Jim was unable to drive or buy tickets for the theatre or balance the checkbook. Elizabeth, of course, was changed too. She knew he relied on her more than ever before. She worried if he

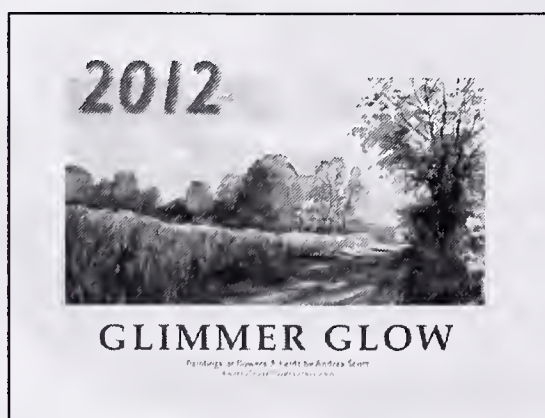
was alone. The stress was intense.

The medical profession, for the most part, was unhelpful. As Jim's condition deteriorated, they knew he would require extra care. But a nursing home was not appropriate. Jim could only be happy at home. So that was where he went, and Elizabeth, with the help of two women, provided his care.

*Dignifying Dementia* tells a moving, harrowing, fascinating and instructive story. Elizabeth wrote it because she hoped it might be helpful to others facing the same sadness. At this time there is no cure for Lewy Body dementia, which afflicts more than one million people and their families.

But read as a love story, it is moving and hopeful. —John G. Wightman

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## OLD AND YOUNG WORKING TOGETHER

Sometimes it takes real effort for the young and old to communicate. The Sheffield Senior Center has been providing opportunities to bridge the gap. Here's an update on some of those programs:

**Design and photography.** The Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation recently provided funds through the Joseph H. and Carol F. Reich Fund for collaborative programs between Sheffield seniors and design and photography students from Mt. Everett High School.

Students from the Foundations of Design Class interviewed and worked with seniors about products that could aid in some manual task. Over a few weeks, ideas for new or improved products were developed into prototypes of fabric, paper, card stock, plastic or clay. Four prototypes were made: an improved cap on plastic milk cartons, an improved cane with accessories for any weather condition, an improved grasper and a "holding hand"—a glove fitted with strategically placed pieces of Velcro to aid in holding various tools, including a paint brush. To show off the designs, a gathering was held at the Senior Center with invited guests.

The Digital Photo Class shot individual and group portraits, some in period costume, at the Senior Holiday Luncheon, with food prepared by High School Culinary Arts students.

**Seniors sew for elementary students.** Sheffield Seniors recently sewed aprons for the Eat Well and Learn Class, a collaborative program at Undermountain Elementary led by first-grade teacher Susan Weinstein; Jenny Schwartz, outreach educator for Berkshire Co-op Market; and Robert Hoechster, dietician at Fairview Hospital. Using donated material, seniors cut the patterns and sewed 20 child-sized and 6 adult-sized aprons. They met the students and teachers in class to present the aprons. A lot of fun was had choosing and trying on the aprons. A collaborative project in the spring with the school vegetable garden is being planned.

**Skype with seniors.** Mt. Everett National Honors Society students donated time during the holiday vacation

to show interested seniors how to use Skype Internet video messages to communicate with their loved ones. The students earned volunteer hours in addition to showing off their computer skills.

**Astronomy talk planned.** In late January, Sam Cabot, a Berkshire School junior and student of astronomy, will give a talk and slide show at the Sheffield Senior Center for Sheffield seniors and guests from the Great Barrington Senior Center. Plans are being made for field trips to see the stars through the telescope at the Berkshire School Conservatory.

**Life histories and mentoring project.** Sheffield seniors and middle school students will be coming together for eight weeks starting in January for the Senior Life History Project, which incorporates mentoring, writing, photography and video production. Students are paired up with a senior mentor with the aim of creating an historical account of the senior's life. Mentor matches will also be made for weekly meetings of social and assistance activities at the Senior Center and at the Thursday evening community Breaking



*Above, design students and seniors discuss limitations of existing products. Below, students present their design for the "holding hand."*



Bread Dinners at the American Legion. There are still spaces available and middle-schoolers waiting to be paired with a senior. Call the Senior Center at 229-7037 for more information and to sign up. The project is supported by the Tufts Health Plan Foundation and the CHP South Berkshire Community Coalition.

—Trudy Weaver Miller

## FRIENDS OF THE SENIOR CENTER

**Officers elected.** In November, the 2012 slate of officers was elected at the Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Sheffield Senior Center: Claudia Martin, president; Michelle Harwood, first vice president; Norma Moulton, second vice president; Kathy Posey, third vice president; Gail Tighe, clerk; and Tom Tighe, treasurer.

**Raffle results.** Two items—a beautiful dry floral arrangement made and donated by Dawn Massini and a handmade afghan donated by Grace Campbell—were raffled off at the Senior Center's Holiday Social on Dec. 15. Tom Tighe won the arrangement, Ken Spencer the afghan. Congratulations to the winners and thank you to all participants! Proceeds will help buy materials for pro-

grams and activities at the Senior Center.

**Fundraising ideas needed.** The Friends are planning fundraising activities for the coming year. Anyone with ideas or who would like to join the Friends as a board member or as a volunteer at an event, call Claudia Martin at 229-2871.

## BOOK DONATIONS REQUESTED

Do you have hardcover or paperback books, CDs, DVDs, audio books, or old vinyl records you want to get out of your house? Books donated to Got Books will support activities at the Senior Center. Just put the books and other media (please no textbooks) in the large, grey metal container just beyond the shed near the Center's parking lot. Got Books will reimburse the Friends by weight for collected items, which they resell.

## FROM THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MINUTES

### Sept. 22 working meeting

The Board decided to offer the position of Assistant Town Administrator to Jennifer Goewey. The title of the position will be changed to Assistant to the Town Administrator. The probationary period will be until June 30, 2012, with an informal evaluation on February 1, 2012.

### Sept. 26 working meeting

The town's Finance Committee—David Steindler, Chair, Colin Smith, Vice-Chair, David Macy and John James—attended. Selectman Julie Hannum updated everyone on the discussions that have taken place regarding the bond for the Southern Berkshire Regional School District. Discussion ensued regarding a bond for technology needs only, a SBRSD capital plan, debt exclusion, computer hardware and software, timing of the bond issuance, labor contracts and other issues.

The Board and the Finance Committee agreed that they would like to have a long-range capital plan in place before any bond is issued and that it would be better if the School Committee waited until the FY 2013 budget was finalized before requesting a bond.

The Board approved appointing Jennifer Goewey as Assistant to the Town Administrator at an annual salary of \$38,000.

It approved the agreement prepared by the Town Counsel regarding the American Legion storage shed.

After discussing the employee vacation schedule, Chairman Rene Wood said she'd contact the surrounding towns for

information on their vacation policies.

The Board decided to request a meeting with John Arthur Miller, Senior Center director, and the Council on Aging to discuss expectations and review operations. It decided to authorize the Highway Dept. to install a split rail fence at the southern entrance of the Senior Center.

### Oct. 19 regular meeting

The Board discussed the position of Town Hall Support Staff.

### Oct. 24 working meeting

The Board discussed the private landing strip zoning issue and agreed to refer the issue back to the Town Building Inspector, Thomas Carmody.

The Board agreed to appoint Jill Hughes as Town Hall Support Staff at the rate of \$15 per hour, 30 hours per week to begin on November 14.

The Board discussed the use of the Senior Center [*where this meeting was being held*]. Administrator LaBombard clarified that the building is a Town-owned building and that the Board is in charge of any changes to the building. The policy regarding use of the building will be reviewed after one year. The discussion also covered the role of the Council on Aging, building safety and staff hours. The Council on Aging submitted a letter asking for increased staff hours.

David Steindler, David Macy and Judith Schnurr from the Finance Committee said they agreed the Town should request a level-funded budget for the

school district in FY2013, which would result in a level-funded assessment of the five towns in the district. The Board unanimously agreed to make that request.

### Oct. 27 regular meeting

After meeting in executive session for 27 minutes to discuss the possible discipline or dismissal of a town employee, the Board returned to open session. It agreed to send a letter of support to the U.S. Dept. of Transportation in support of the Tiger 3 Grant application to update all the Housatonic Railroad tracks in town. The Board also approved change order #8 for the Senior Center for paint and paving.

### Nov. 7 regular meeting

David Macy has submitted a letter of interest for appointment to the Bylaw Review Committee. The Building Inspector, Tom Carmody, recommended Ben Granskot for appointment as the alternate Building Inspector. The Board had questions and tabled discussion until Mr. Carmody could be present.

The Board appointed Gail Mullen to the Commission on Disabilities for a term to expire June 14, 2013.

Chairman Wood updated the Board on the work of the Massachusetts Broadband Institute.

Administrator LaBombard stated that Michael Ovitt, Treasurer/Collector, has been granted recertification from the Massachusetts Collector/Treasurer Association. The Board congratulates Ovitt and will send him a letter.

Chairman Wood announced that



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## 2012 BOARD OF HEALTH FEES

Food establishment (including catering) or food-processing plant	\$50
Caterer	\$50
Special event with food service or temporary food establishment	\$25
Bakery	\$27
Milk and cream store license (commercially pasteurized)	\$12
Mobile food operation	\$50
Residential kitchen	\$50
Bed-and-breakfast home or establishment	\$50
Recreational camp (per session)	\$50
Tanning facility	\$25
Trash/refuse hauling permit	\$105
Septage hauling permit	\$80
Tobacco license	\$15
Funeral director	\$150
Private well-construction permit	\$60
Disposal-system construction permit	\$50
Disposal-works installer's permit	\$50
Perc test witness, per lot (+ \$45/hour over 3 hours)	\$100
Title 5 witness fee per lot, per occurrence	\$50
Certificate of compliance	\$15

Jill Hughes has accepted the position as Town Hall Support Staff and will start on Nov. 14. She also announced that the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation donated \$1,000 to the Town.

Wood noted that the new Ford 150 highway truck has been received and reminded residents of the parking ban for the Village Green from Nov. 1 to April 15. She said that the Massachusetts Dept. of Transportation will hold a public hearing and informational meeting regarding the replacement of the Ashley Falls bridge.

### Nov. 14 regular meeting

Priscilla Cote, chair of the town Board of Health, was present to discuss the Board of Health's request to increase 2012 license fees. Administrator LaBombard will prepare a list of businesses and the licenses they currently hold. The Board will follow up on this issue at the next regular meeting.

Snowplowing bids were received. Richard Boardman bid \$55 per hour for a driver and truck with plow and \$65 per hour with driver and truck with plow and sand. Arthur Mathieu bid \$60 and \$70 for the same. The Board approved the bid from Boardman. Mathieu will be contacted to see if he's interested in plowing at the accepted rate.

The town received bids on surplus Highway Dept. equipment:

- For a 1986 Morbark Chipper: Ronald Bassett, \$326; Tim Hanlowich, \$769; Matt Roche, \$825.

- For a 1993 International Tractor: Matt Roche, \$225; Tim Hanlowich, \$250.

- For a 1990 International Dump Truck: Matt Roche, \$225; Tim Handlowich-\$250.

- For two spreader boxes: Tim Handlowich, \$200.

- For a 3414 International Tractor with bucket: Tim Hanlowich, \$300; Art Lefleur, \$375; Ronald Bassett, \$526; Scott Mackenzie, \$550; Thomas Gage-\$856; Matt Roche, \$1,176.

The Board approved the highest bids. No bids were received for a 1986 Chevrolet one-ton truck. The Board authorized the Town Administrator to dispose of it.

### November 21 regular meeting

The Board approved fees for Board of Health (see the table at left). Thomas Carmody, the town Building Inspector and Zoning Enforcement Officer, gave an update on the private landing strip situation, two sign zoning situations and several other enforcement issues.

The Board discussed repairing the elevator in Town Hall and voted to contract with Maximillian for the cleanup and removal of the hydraulic oil and with Thyssen & Krupp for the repair and a maintenance agreement.

The Board voted to establish sheet metal regulations to comply with MGL 112,237-251 and sheet metal regulation 271 CMR, with a fee of \$50, as recommended by the Building Inspector. The Board decided to table discussion regarding the position of Assistant Building Inspector until FY2013 budget meetings.

The Board voted to appoint David Macy to the Bylaw Review Committee. Scott Smith sent a letter of request to serve as alternate to the Public Health Alliance.

The Board discussed policy and procedures at the Transfer Station and its holiday schedule. It voted to pay transfer station attendants for Christmas Day.

Administrator LaBombard updated the Board on FEMA assistance for Hurricane Irene, Tropical Storm Lee, and the October snowstorm.

MASS DOT will be holding a public hearing in the Town Hall on Tuesday, November 29, 2011 for the replacement of the bridge over the Housatonic Railroad

on Ashley Falls Road. The public is invited to attend to discuss the replacement and alternate route during construction.

### Nov. 29 working meeting

Tammy Blackwell, Principal Assessor, was present. She recommended adopting a single tax rate of \$12.84 per thousand in assessed valuation. That makes the excess levy capacity \$22,082.84. The Board voted to adopt that rate. [At the Dec. 5 meeting, it was noted that this rate would result in a \$100 increase for the average property owner.]

The Board voted to reimburse Mark Bachetti the \$200 he paid for the removal of the old shed by the American Legion Hall now that the new one is in place.

### Dec. 5 working meeting

Grace Campbell was again present to discuss issues concerning the Senior Center. The Board decided to attend a Council on Aging meeting to discuss the issues there. Building Inspector Tom Carmody will be contacted regarding storage for cleaning supplies.

The Board discussed the retirement of

*Continued on page 12*

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## **MINUTES, continued from page 11**

the school district's superintendant and a Highway Dept. personnel issue.

### **Dec. 5 regular meeting**

The Board voted to appoint Thomas Manghue as a Seasonal Snow Plow Driver at \$15.50 per hour as needed.

The Board discussed the current coverage for back wages through Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association. Per Administrator LaBombard's recommendation, the Board voted to keep the current coverage of \$50,000.

A public hearing was held on the Ashley Falls Bridge reconstruction on Nov. 29. Chairman Wood drafted a letter summarizing the concerns that were expressed there, and the Board voted to send it to the Mass DOT. Administrator LaBombard stated that the construction was expected to be completed in one season, and she has an information packet for residents.

The Board voted to put all perc test and Title V witness fees into the Board of Health Revolving Fund and license fees to remain in the General Fund.

Administrator LaBombard stated that

the Town received two bids for the purchase of a backhoe and recommended that both bids be rejected because they were higher than the amount appropriated by voters at the 2010 Annual Town Meeting. The Board voted to reject the bids.

Discussion ensued regarding 2012 tobacco licenses. Per Administrator LaBombard's recommendation, the Board voted to issue licenses per calendar year, pending concurrence of the Board of Health.

Selectman Hannum thanked Tammy Blackwell and the Hewins Family for the holiday decorations.

Chairman Wood noted that the District Local Technical Assistant Grant deadline was Jan. 18. Discussion ensued.

Susan Butler requested to be put on the next agenda to discuss the private landing strip zoning enforcement issue.

The board entered into Executive Session to discuss collective bargaining.

### **Dec. 12 working meeting**

The Board discussed updating of the personnel policy manual and then entered into Executive Session.

## MEETINGS WITH OTHER TOWNS

### **Oct. 5**

The Sheffield Board of Selectmen met with representatives of Alford, Egremont, Monterey and New Marlborough to discuss contract negotiations for the three unions at the school district. Selectman Hannum was appointed to be the towns' representative, with Town Administrator Rhonda LaBombard the alternate.

Discussion ensued regarding the Fiscal Year 2013 budget, municipal health care reform, salary increases and the long-range capital plan.

Bruce Turner, selectman from Egremont, will provide each town's assessment for FY10, FY11 and FY12 for the next meeting.

### **Oct. 19**

All towns were represented with the exception of Monterey. The meeting continued discussion of the outlying school buildings and other financial matters. The goal for FY 2013 is to have an operating budget that all five towns can support.

### **Nov. 9**

Sheffield, New Marlborough and Monterey were present. The meeting reviewed results of the Oct. 27 School Committee meeting.



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## PLANNING BOARD: Dec. 7 meeting

The Planning Board has met only once since Oct. 26, for a Special Permit Public Hearing on an application to open a **brewery on Silver St.**

At the hearing, Bill Heaton introduced his wife, Christine, and their two children and described their professional background. They would like to open a small, craft brewery. The business is considered light manufacturing. Heaton said the Board could consider the proposed business as a "liquid bread bakery."

Mark Mendel of Monterey Masonry, next door to this proposed brewery, said he would welcome these neighbors. Chris Weld of Home Rd., the owner of Berkshire Mountain Distillers, said that his business is similar. He considers the impact of the business benign, with a byproduct of spent grain.

Attorney Alex Glover stated that she is representing Pete Batacchi. She asked about the definition of light manufacturing, had questions about the tentative closing date and wanted to see the site plan.

Peter Cherneff, a Planning Board member, asked Heaton to describe the business. Heaton said that he and Christine, who is the brewer, will hire four people in the first year. They plan to be open from 8am-6pm weekdays with tours on Saturdays and closed on Sundays. Barley and wheat will be delivered on tractor-trailers once a month. The property has a well, and they are currently determining whether it can meet their needs. There is also town water on Silver St. The business would produce some waste. They want to stay small and plan to use local ingredients—maple syrup, honey, cider, any starchy root vegetable. He said that there are farmers in Sheffield interested in growing grain for them.

Heaton said that they would be considered a "farm brewer" under Massachusetts law, allowed to sell samples and self-distribute. The beer will be packaged in kegs and recyclable aluminum cans. The brewery will distribute to local restaurants, with kegs loaned and returned with the next refill. The company would have a sampling room and sell beer to go. They would like to run tours on the weekends.

An existing large parking lot on the property would more than accommodate their needs. Heaton indicated that tractor-trailer truck traffic would be greatly reduced from what it had been with the prior business at the site. He said that the company was in downtown Pittsfield for five years and did not have any complaints about their traffic.

David West, who lives one mile further west on Silver St., also spoke. He said that the new business would improve the site. He also described how 18-wheelers trying to make deliveries at existing businesses frequently miss the signs and go down Silver St. and try to turn at Bull Hill Rd. or LeGeyt Rd. West hoped that the brewery will have clear signage so that doesn't happen with the brewery's delivery trucks as well.

Maggie Martin, a Planning Board member, asked about lighting. David Smith, Sr., the chair, suggested better lighting on the parking side of the building. Heaton agreed.

Smith said that the Board needs to see a site plan. As soon

## THANKS FOR THE CHEER!

Thanks to all who helped decorate Sheffield for the holidays, in Town Hall, on the Green, and the Town tree: Tammy Blackwell and the Hewins family, the Highway Dept. and Winthrop Barrett of Barrett Tree Service.

as it's received, the Board will set a date for deliberation and notify Attorney Glover, who would also like to see the site plan.

**Bylaw Review Committee.** The committee also met on Dec. 7. Present were Chris Tomich, who was elected chair; David Smith, Sr., elected vice chair; David Macy and Peter R. Cherneff. Committee members Tony Gulotta and Eric Carlson were absent. James T. Collingwood Jr. and David West also attended.

Sample bylaws have been distributed to the committee members. The committee discussed going to other towns to look at signs and agreed that when they identify a town whose signs look good, that town's ordinance could serve as a template. Members discussed taking pictures of signs in Sheffield that are examples of signs that support the development of our town. They would make sure such signs would fall within any proposed bylaw. The purpose of the committee is to create bylaws that say what is not permissible.

For the next meeting, Tomich will bring pictures of signs in Sheffield and David West will bring the measurements he has taken of each sign. Everyone will review the current bylaw.

—Nadia Milleron, Planning Board Secretary

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## CONSERVATION COMMISSION: Sept. 12, Oct. 11 & 24, Nov. 14 meetings

In September and October, the Conservation Commission held several public hearings on a Request for Determination of Applicability of wetlands regulations:

- Martin and Kitty Jacobs, 992 Foley Rd., for eradication of non-native invasive plant species. Jess Toro of Native Habitat Restoration represented the applicants. She said that the "clip and drip" method would be used, which applies herbicide directly to the invasive plants. The best time to do this is before mid-October, when it gets too cold and the plants are not actively growing. The work will be done through a Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program grant, since the appearance of this invasive species (phragmites) is an impediment to wildlife migration. The Commission ruled that wetlands regulations did not apply.

- George Oleen, 997 Foley Rd., for the same situation. The Commission again ruled that wetland regulations did not apply.

- Sheffield Land Trust, property near the cemetery on Salisbury Rd., removing a dead tree and debris and a winter burn. Don Ward recused himself as he is on the board of the Land Trust. Kathy Orlando and Ted Pitman were present for the applicant. Where restoration work had previously taken place, a dead cherry tree is about to fall over and needs to be removed. There is also debris from a fallen tree that the applicant would like to burn. The burning will be done in an area 100 yards away from the Schenob Brook. Under the Notice of Intent for the restoration work, the Land Trust agreed to notify the Com-

mission when end-of-season mowing was taking place. This was now being done. The Commission ruled that wetlands regulations did not apply.

- Mary R. and Anne L. Chase, for property on 1072 Lime Kiln Rd., upgrade of existing failed septic system to conform with Title 5 regulations. Brent White of White Engineering was present for the applicant. The site is within 100 feet of two areas of vegetated wetlands. It was chosen to provide a greater distance from the water supply, which comes via a suction line to a spring. After the Commission made a site visit, it approved the project and issued a determination that wetlands regulations did not apply.

- Francis Garretson, property on 1152 Barnum St., eradication of non-native invasive species using wetland-approved herbicides. Jess Toro was present for the applicant, who wishes to remove the invasive species of plants to open up more area for wetland plants and animal habitat.

The site consists of forested wetland and open fen, and the Schenob Brook runs through. A walk-behind mower will be used to remove brush. The Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, contacted because of rare species on the site, suggested removing any trees from December through March. Mowed material will be mulched and left on the site, and cut trees will be left on site, as requested. Closer to the growing season, the Dept. will provide an environmental monitor.

The Commission issued a negative

determination pending a site visit.

- The Nature Conservancy (TNC) proposed a restoration plan on two properties that are part of the Conservancy's Schenob Brook Preserve. Leslie Luchonek of TNC and Emily Stockman of Stockman Associates were present. A neighboring parcel, the Kilbon property, was restored during the summer after being damaged, and plantings for re-vegetation were done in the fall by Native Habitat Restoration. A two-year monitoring program will begin in the spring.

Violations occurred on these properties. Presently, all sites are stable, and the violator was notified to cease and desist all activities. TNC has been in contact with the Div. of Fisheries and Wildlife's Natural Heritage program about the restoration plan.

On Parcel 2, which contains rare species habitat, a pond had been dredged of water vegetation in 2008, possibly to keep it as open water, and birdhouses and a boardwalk built. Bordering vegetated wetlands have been flagged. Dredged materials and structures, including stones and boards placed for access, will be removed. The pond will be allowed to revert to swamp, and phragmites will be removed. Disturbed ground will be seeded with a native mix and mulched with straw. Mowing will continue every other year to maintain an open field, which supports rare species, and any rare plants will be flagged.

TNC has requested approval from an abutter to allow truck and excavator access as the property is landlocked and has also

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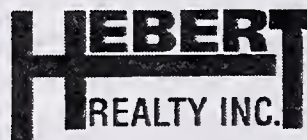
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requested an alternative plan be approved by the Commission. The restoration will take place in the "dry season" (July 1 to Sept. 30) next year. Emily Stockman, an environmental monitor, and Angela Sirois of TNC, a rare species expert, will be on site during the work.

On the Bartholomew parcel, there is bordering vegetated wetlands, a shrub swamp, forested wetlands and wet meadow wetlands. A "historic" stone wall was relocated closer to the wetlands, probably about 2005. The move created a gain of some wetlands, but not enough to make up for the loss caused by fill. The original stone wall most likely had gaps in it, and the relocated wall is solid, making it a potential barrier to rare species movement.

Only about 140 linear feet of this site, in a core habitat of rare species, will be addressed. TNC, after consulting with Natural Heritage, is proposing to partially deconstruct the stone wall, removing an area 3 feet wide every 15 feet. The stones will be taken off site.

The Commission scheduled a site visit for these properties.

Over several meetings, the Commission discussed possible violations on the property of Edward Ustico on Polikoff Rd. Ustico was present for one of the meetings.

Terry Eucker from the Berkshire Conservation Agent Program reported on her site visit. The property has several areas:

Area 1 meets the criteria of a pond, due to its size, existence of a surrounding berm, standing water and a channel running into it, although the channel only seems to have existed since 2009. Eucker believes this area to be under the purview of the Conservation Commission. She encourages the property owner to have the area delineated by a professional wetlands scientist.

Area 2 has been designated as a shallow marsh. It could be isolated land subject to flooding or a vernal pool, which are under the Commission's purview, or an isolated wetlands, which is not, but is regulated by the Army Corps of Engineers. Any work done in this area would need a permit from Natural Heritage.

Area 3, adjacent to a bog, is a rare species habitat. It shows as floodplain on Army Corps of Engineer maps. It can be inspected by an engineer to determine if it does not meet that criteria, in which case a report must be submitted to the Commission for its approval. Any loss of flood plain storage, meaning anything that is put in that area and taking up space, such as dirt piles, equipment, etc., must be compensated for elsewhere. The area that had been driven over, creating a "road," should be restored and barriers put up to prevent any further damage from entering vehicles. Because the area is in a buffer zone to a rare species habitat, any plans to mow there must go through the Commission, and Natural Heritage will need to be consulted.

Any work done since a Certificate of Compliance was issued is unpermitted. The Commission believes Ustico should not be required to restore the filled-in wet area since he was acting under information provided by the Commission at the time. With respect to other areas, a formal letter should be issued requesting a restoration plan and enforcement action taken if Ustico proves uncooperative.

Ustico stated that the area was formerly used as a gravel pit. Since he's owned it, for six years, he's been told not to do any excavating and was issued a cease and desist order. The Commission noted that whether the property was "legally" a gravel pit was not theirs to decide. Ustico

wishes to enlarge the pond and to hay on the property. He was told that both these activities would require a permit. Eucker stated that if filling is required to create a field for planting, Ustico would need to determine wetlands boundaries and compensate for anything lost, including any vernal pools.

At the November meeting, the Commission gave Ustico 30 days to hire a consultant and prepare a restoration plan. He is to immediately cease and desist all activities including dumping, filling and grading and to immediately make the area being used as a road inaccessible to motorized vehicles. If the Commission does not receive a response within this allotted amount of time, an Enforcement Order will be issued.

In other business, the Commission received notice of emergency foundation repair at the property of James Windus and Barbara Canas at 176 Maple Ave.

The Commission received a letter from an adjacent property owner regarding run off from power washing at **Pete's Sunoco station**. This has been an ongoing problem—it was resolved for a time, but is now happening again. The Commission agreed to speak with the owner of the service station. If the situation is not corrected, an Enforcement Order will be issued.

The Commission received a letter from the Appalachian Trail Management Committee, advising of the proposed repair of a footbridge on a **part of the trail along Route 7**. The Commission planned a site visit to the property.

The Commission also planned to make a site visit regarding the proposed construction of a **culvert on Home Rd.** to correct a run off problem onto an adjacent neighbor's property.

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## TOWN CLERK NEWS

**Hunting and fishing.** As of 2012, the Town of Sheffield will no longer be a vendor of hunting and fishing licenses or stamps. We do have a supply of wildlife abstracts listing the seasons and regulations. For a list of vendors, contact our office or go to the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife website at [www.mass.gov/masswildlife](http://www.mass.gov/masswildlife).

**Landlord census.** If you are a landlord who has not responded to the Landlord Census, please respond as soon as possible.

**Annual street lists.** We are mailing out census forms at the beginning of January. I cannot stress enough the importance of checking your form for accuracy, signing and returning it as soon as possible. It is time-consuming and costly to send out another mailing and make follow-up phone calls. If you do not respond within a timely manner, the police department will be following up to verify residency, per Chapter 51, §4 and Chapter 234A, §10. In addition,

registered voters will be placed on the Inactive List.

**Dog licensing.** The census forms will have information on dog licensing. This is the only reminder that you will receive. Please remember that if you have a dog six months of age or older, or if you reside in Sheffield a minimum of 30 days of the year, you are required to license your dog. The fees are \$10 for intact dogs, \$5 for spayed/neutered dogs. Licensing takes place annually from March 1 to May 1. After that, there's a fine of \$25 per dog. If you acquire a new dog, it can be licensed anytime of year at the regular rate.

The annual Boy Scout Rabies Clinic will be held March 17 from 1-3pm in the Town Hall parking lot. The fee is \$10. Licenses will also be available.

**Elections and voter registration.** This year has a full schedule of elections:

Tues., March 6: Presidential Primary

Mon., May 7: Annual Town Meeting

## ASSESSOR'S & COLLECTOR'S

Fiscal Year 2012 actual tax bills were mailed in December. Payments are due Feb. 1 and May 1. For questions regarding valuation, contact the Assessor's Office. Other questions, call the Collector's Office.

Mon., May 14: Annual Town Election

Thurs., Sept. 6: State Primary

Tues., Nov. 6: State/Presidential Election

Note that the date of the state primary has been moved up from its original date of Tues., Nov. 18.

The deadline to obtain nomination papers for town offices up for election this year is Fri., March 23. The deadline to return papers to the Board of Registrars for certification is Mon., March 26.

The deadline to register to vote or change party status is 20 days prior to an election. I recommend checking your voter status well before the event. Voter registration is available year round. You may also visit the Secretary of State's website at [www.sec.state.ma.us/e](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/e).

All elections will be held at the Senior Center on Cook Rd. For questions or information, contact the office at 229-7000, ext. 151. —Felecie Joyce, Town Clerk

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## The Sheffield Historical Society



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The 1774 Dan Raymond House Museum offers tours May through September. Come explore the daily lives of common people from the Revolutionary generation onward, including the intriguing history of the Sheffield Tory for whom the house is named.

The Mark Dewey Research Center houses the town's early archives, including tax and real estate records, historic photographs, and genealogical research. Open most Mondays and Fridays, from 1:30 to 4pm, year round.

The 1834 Old Stone Store located on the Town Green functions as the Society's gift shop and exhibition space. Open weekends April to December.

159 Main Street • PO Box 747 • Sheffield, MA 01257  
413.229.2694 • [shs@sheffieldhistory.org](mailto:shs@sheffieldhistory.org)  
[WWW.SHEFFIELDHISTORY.ORG](http://WWW.SHEFFIELDHISTORY.ORG)

## CULTURAL COUNCIL GRANTS AWARDED

The Sheffield Cultural Council receives state monies each year to support cultural and environmental programs in our community. The allocation from the Massachusetts Cultural Council for 2012 was \$3,870, less than in past years.

The Sheffield Council received 39 applications and has awarded 21 grants:

43 percent to community programs, 24 percent to children's programs, 29 percent to school programs, and 5 percent to Library programs.

Council members are Sally Chamberlin Cook, Jamie Foster, Marcia Friedman, Trudy Miller and David Reed. New members are always welcome!

### SHEFFIELD CULTURAL COUNCIL GRANTS FOR 2012

Ashley Falls Village Improvement Society	Memorial Day Parade
Bazaar Productions	Theatrical readings
Berkshire Children's Chorus	Scholarship for a local child
Berkshire Playwrights Lab	Free staged theatrical readings
Contempaissance Flute & Guitar Duo	Sheffield Historical Society program
Davis Bates, musician	Library family program
Flying Cloud Institute	Youth Environmental Summit
ISI 83 Art School of the Berkshires	Scholarships for local children
Middle and High School Writing Group	Julie Shapiro, facilitator
Mt. Everett Regional School	Latin American Culture program
New Marlborough Village Association	Music and More Series
Peggy Hendon-Wilson	Winter Solstice school program
Shakespeare & Co.	School theatre program
Sheffield American Legion	Boys & Girls State Scholarship support
Sheffield Friendly Union (2)	Folk Music Series at Dewey Hall & Good Samaritan Fund Benefit Concert
Sheffield Whinnies 4H Club	Scholarships
Terry a La Berry & Friends, musicians	Family musical program
Undermountain Elementary School	Visit to Colonel Ashley House
Ventford Hall Association	Lectures attended by local residents

## COMMUNITY HELPS ADDRESS SHEFFIELD'S HOUSING NEEDS

Sheffield is second only to Great Barrington in the number of residents who applied to Construct, Inc. for emergency assistance in the past year. With the enormous cuts in government assistance for heat and other utilities and the decrease in jobs, particularly during the winter, there are an ever-increasing number of people who have to look for help from others.

In this bleak scene, Sheffield residents have stepped up to the plate. Local congregations and other individuals worked hard to raise money at Construct's Annual Walk to Prevent Homelessness in October. Community members joined their South County

neighbors to attend the November Warm Up the Winter Concert, which raised over \$3,000. The concert by the Woods Tea Company to benefit the Good Samaritan Fund also brought many supporters.

In December, many Sheffield residents attended the amazing benefit dinner at Castle Street Café in Great Barrington, which raised an additional \$6,000. Equinox Farm, on Bow Wow Rd. in Sheffield, donated produce for that event.

In addition to helping meet emergency needs, Sheffield is working to increase workforce housing—housing that community employees, young

adults, seniors and others can afford. The town passed an accessory apartment by-law at its May 2011 Town Meeting. The Sheffield Housing Commission hosted an informational meeting about the new by-law in November. Interested residents who have questions can call the Building Inspector, Tom Carmody, or Michael Citrin, chair of the Housing Commission.

Housing and related needs continue to be major issues for many Sheffield residents. The problem will not go away, but many community members are concerned and are working to help. Sheffield is indeed a good place to live.

—Marilyn Wightman

## DISABILITIES COMMISSION

**Speaker series.** The January program will be presented in conjunction with the Sheffield Senior Center's monthly luncheon on January 19. Dawn Matthews, director of Assistive Technology from the United Cerebral Palsy Center of Berkshire County, will demonstrate devices and strategies that can help people who have vision, hearing or speech impairments maintain their independence. The program will take place at the Sheffield Senior Center. The luncheon will begin at 12 noon, with the talk starting at 12:45 p.m. For more information, contact David or Nan Wells at 229-8372 or nan1940@aol.com.

**Commission needs volunteers!** The Disabilities Commission needs more people. Anyone who is a resident of Sheffield and who is interested in helping and advocating for the citizens of Sheffield with disability issues can contact Rhonda LaBombard at Sheffield Town Hall, 21 Depot Square, P.O. Box 325, Sheffield, MA 01257 or 229-7000, Ext. 152 or rlabombard@sheffieldma.gov. The Commission also welcomes input and suggestions.

**Assistive technology available for town events.** Assistive listening devices, large print or Braille versions of printed material and other services may be available with a two-week notice. Contact Rhonda LaBombard, Sheffield's coordinator of the Americans with Disabilities Act. See above item for contact information.

### '60 MINUTES' AT THE COL. ASHLEY HOUSE

In an interview broadcast on "60 Minutes" Dec. 18, Meryl Streep brought Morley Safer to the Col. Ashley House in Ashley Falls to talk about Elizabeth Freeman (Mumbet) as an example of a little-known story of women in America. Streep is working to raise money for a national women's history museum in Washington, DC.

The segment showed Streep demonstrating how Col. Ashley's wife burned Mumbet with a hot fire shovel, an injury that led to Mumbet being the first slave to successfully sue for her freedom. Streep



and Safer were also shown viewing the new interpretative center in the garage at the historic house. Since the show aired, the Trustees of the Reservations have sent Streep a Mumbet doll.

### 4-H NEWS: THERAPY CHICKENS

Using animals as therapy for seniors is hardly a new concept, but the use of chickens is definitely a novelty. Three members of the Sheffield-based Trailblazers 4-H group—Thomas Williams (age 9), Charlotte Smith (9) and Kristen Wolfe (14)—take a selection of their prized pet chickens to visit the elderly.

While the group's main activities are hiking and camping, community service is also important. Thomas, Charlotte and Kristen gathered a selection of their friendliest chickens and visited Kimble Farms Retirement Village in Lenox, which runs a life enrichment program for their residents. With names such as Petunia, Autumn, Tiki, Lavender and Seth, the chickens range from small fluffy

bantams to large hens who love to sit quietly in people's laps and be petted.

Seeing the chickens triggers happy memories for many of Kimball Farms' residents, who grew up in an era when most people raised chickens.

"It makes me feel good that I've made people happy," says Thomas.

"The residents are always so impressed by the children and their confidence and goodwill," said Sharon Lazon, who is activities director for the Life Enrichment Program. "They admire the beautiful colors in the feathers and the softness and snuggliness of the birds. It's a double source of pleasure and joy when both children and chickens come here."

—Sally Wilson

### COBBLE EVENTS

#### Saturday Snowshoe Trek

Sat., Jan 14 and Feb 18. 10am-12noon. Join a Trustees of Reservations guide to explore the Cobble and beyond with an easy-to-moderate snowshoes hike. Trustees members \$5, nonmembers \$10. Snowshoes rental included. Call or email to let us know you are coming.

#### Beetles of the World

Thurs., Jan 26, 6-7pm. Back by popular demand! Rene Wendell, Sr., will once again talk about his years of experience as a hunter, trapper, taxidermist and amateur entomologist. This time he will bring beetles from around the globe. It is sure to be an interesting evening! Let us know you are coming. Free.

#### Low-Impact Forestry

Sat., Feb 4, 10am-2pm. Will Conklin and Rich Ciotola will talk about how logging can be done in a more ecologically friendly way and show how to use oxen to haul an oak tree that was downed by hurricane Irene from the Cobble. A portable saw mill will be in the parking area to turn the logs into usable lumber. Bring your own lunch. Warm drinks provided. Trustees members \$5, nonmembers \$10. Children Free. Let us know you are coming.

#### The History of Waterfowling and the Art of the Decoy: An American Tradition

Thurs., Feb 23. 6-7pm. Meet Ken Schopp, local outdoorsman extraordinaire, who will talk about the history of waterfowl hunting and how it is done today. He will share his years of experiences and some of his collection of decoys—he is a master decoy carver. Let us know you are coming. Free.

*The Trustees of Reservations manage Bartholomew's Cobble, a National Natural Landmark, on Weatogue Rd. in Ashley Falls. It's open year-round, daily, sunrise to sunset. The Visitor's Center is open from 9am-4pm Tuesday-Saturday during winter. Regular admission is free for members of The Trustees of Reservations and Sheffield residents. Non-members: \$5 adult, \$1 child. Call 229-8600 or email bcobble@ttor.org.*

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## KIWANIS NEWS AND EVENTS

**Warm children.** "Amazing" is the only word to describe the Warm the Children project of 2011! This combined effort of Sheffield Kiwanis, the Berkshire Record newspaper and Kmart successfully clothed 150 children in need of warm winter attire. The outpouring of donations in these difficult economic times totally stunned the charity's staff, who were able to go back to their sources and get more and more names of children in need.

Jane Berger and David Johnson were the Kiwanis co-chairs, with 12 happy "shoppers" who met the families at Kmart to assist them in choosing up to \$80 in new warm winter duds.

The fund was aided by last November's Kiwanis Harvest Brunch, with proceeds of more than \$4,800. This annual event at the American Legion Hall was headed by Rene Wood and David Smith, Sr. (Proceeds from last year's brunch were used to purchase furnishings for the Sheffield Senior Center.)

**Raffles.** Winners in the December gas-card raffle were S. Ryan and Peggy Barrett of Great Barrington and Darlene Guidi of Egremont.

Tickets are now available for the major Kiwanis fundraiser of the year: the Scholarship Truck Raffle. This year's scholarship will be established in memory of the late Bill Silk, a 50-year member of Kiwanis. Chances sell for \$50 each for the grand prize of a 2012 GMC Sierra 1500 4x4 with automatic transmission, V-8 engine and air conditioning. The truck is provided by Brian Palmer of Berkshire GMC. The

first-place winner can choose \$15,000 cash instead of the vehicle. Second prize is \$1,500, third place \$500. Tickets are available at the usual businesses and from all Kiwanis members. The drawing happens once again on Feb. 14—Valentine's Night—at The Bridge Restaurant.

**Holiday fare.** For Thanksgiving, our Kiwanis club provided turkeys and trimmings for 36 family dinners. About the same amount of food was donated for Christmas feasts. Dave Smith, Sr., does the purchasing and has help for making the deliveries.

**Holiday cheer.** Kiwanis members also bought toys and other gifts to make 23 children happy on Christmas morning. This Adopt-a-Child program was organized by Denise Rueger.

Dorothy Kelly, Phyllis Pickert and Jane Berger attended the Kiwanis Pediatric Trauma Institute Open House at the Tufts New England Medical Center in Boston on Dec. 3. They delivered 67 tote bags and 18 dolls handmade by Phyllis with some help from other Kiwanians.

This project was prompted by notice

ing that parents who brought a child to the hospital after a sudden accident had no time to think of tooth brush, toothpaste, snacks and other necessities, or a doll for a child's solace. So the idea of making and delivering dolls and totes full of essentials to the Medical Center each year was born.

**Nuts.** Cans of our Gourmet Nuts (so popular over the holidays) are still available. They sell for \$20 a can. John Gilligan spearheads this Kiwanis project.

**Member news and upcoming events.** Cynthia Pease is our newest Kiwanis member. Waiting in the wings are Kayla Gulotta and Susan Rothschild, who are ready to receive their pins and club shirts.

Marge Kirchner and Dave Smith, Sr., headed our Kiwanis team at the Breaking Bread soup kitchen on December 15 at the American Legion Hall.

Kiwanis will benefit from the annual Bowling Tournament in March at the Cove Lanes in Great Barrington.

Another Ham Roll Evening is being considered for late March, before the Easter season. —Dick Goodwin

## AMERICAN LEGION

Veterans living at the Berkshire Rehabilitation & Skilled Care Center in Sandisfield, a long-term care facility, would welcome donations of clothing: T-shirts, regular shirts, underwear, winter hats, gloves and bandanas. They'd also appreciate items like stationary, playing cards, boxes of assorted greeting cards and DVDs.

The facility is located at 7 Sandisfield Rd./Route 57, next to the New Boston Inn. Anyone able to help out these vets during the upcoming year would be greatly appreciated.

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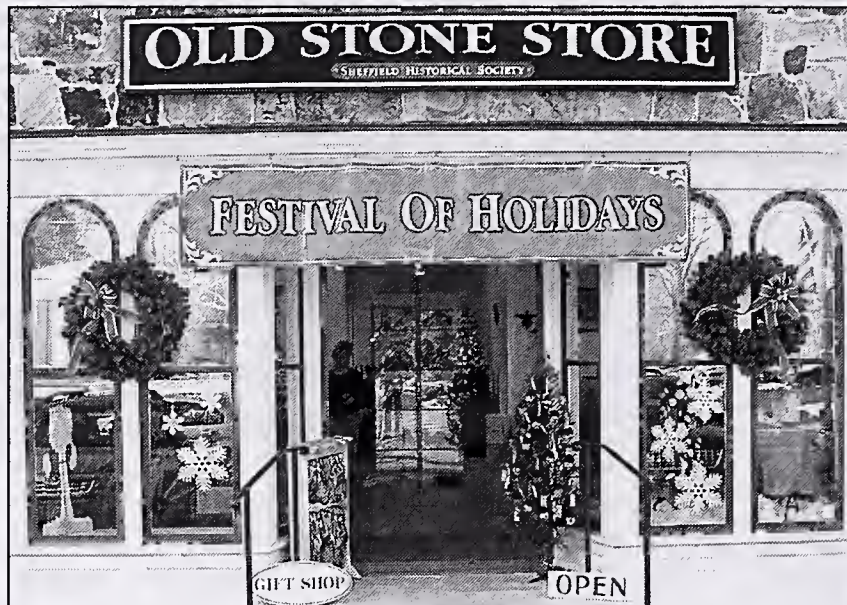
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## HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Another year has passed and become a part of our past. We hope all of you had a safe and happy holiday season. Many thanks to everyone who helped make our Festival of Holidays a great success, especially our wonderful volunteers. Your help and commitment are always appreciated!

It was a busy year at the Sheffield Historical Society. In addition to our monthly programs, which covered things from the area's iron industry to trout farms to W.E.B. DuBois, we commemorated the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War with programs and an exhibit. We met spirits in the cemetery, sold salads at Sheffield in Celebration and celebrated the Yuletide with drinks by the open hearth. There was



*The Historical Society's Old Store Store, all decked out for the annual Festival of Holidays.*

a huge book sale, an exhibit on maps, a parade with old cars, and Mrs. Santa, too. We hope you'll join us in the coming year, either by becoming a member or making a donation of money or time.

Mark your calendars for some events we have planned for the coming year. Our annual "What's It? Night," always great fun, will be on Fri., Jan. 13. In future months, we're arranging programs on topics from political cartoons to songs of the Civil War to local poets and history. Programs take place on the second Friday of every month at 7:30pm at Dewey Hall. Check [www.sheffieldhistory.org](http://www.sheffieldhistory.org) for more details.

And put a big star on Sunday, July 15, for the Summer Garden Party. Enjoy drinks and the elegant gardens of Sheffield's historic Netherby Hall.

This is one of our big fundraisers for the year, so we hope that you can join us.

May you have a safe and wonderful new year. —Barbara Dowling

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## SHEFFIELD LAND TRUST

### SCOUTING NEWS

Since fall, Sheffield's Boy Scouts have been meeting on Wednesdays at 7pm at the American Legion Hall. The Cub Scouts are meeting at various places around town.

Fall events have included Scout support at the Sheffield Fair in early September, followed by an open house and membership drive at the Legion. Sheffield's scouts camped at two weekend Camporees with scouts from other towns, one at Lime Rock Race Track and another at a hunting camp near New Marlborough.

At their meetings, the Boy Scouts prepared for these events and also planned and ran a well-attended roast beef dinner. They successfully worked the Indian Lore Merit badge and then visited the Institute for American Indian Studies in Washington, CT. Over the holiday vacation, 20 of the older scouts spent a day at the Albany indoor rock climbing and caving facility.

Coming up: the Boy Scouts will be working on their Swimming Merit badges at the pool at Simon's Rock College in Great Barrington and their Snow Sports badge at meetings and at Catamount Ski Area in Egremont. February events include skiing, ice fishing, the Klondike and Pinewood Derbies and the Blue and Gold Banquet that celebrates Scouting Week the first week of the month. We would like to thank the community for their tremendous support with these events. —Bill Hogelin

**Winter lecture.** The Land Trust's 12<sup>th</sup> annual winter lecture will be held on Sun., Feb. 26, at Dewey Hall (backup date: Feb. 12). Look for details in local papers and on the Land Trust website.

**The Sheffield-Egremont Corridor.** This multi-phase project will protect more than 2,000 acres in northwest Sheffield and southeast Egremont. Fundraising for Phase II is nearing completion, with nearly \$2 million in gifts and pledges. Maple Shade Farm on Sheffield-Egremont Rd. and other nearby properties as well as farm and mountain land on Rte. 41 and nearby roads have been protected in this phase. Phase III is now in progress, look for details in coming months.

**The Housatonic River Corridor.** The Land Trust is starting fundraising to conserve some 300 acres of farmland, pasture, woods and wetlands on the east side of the river as part of the Brunnschweiler/Pine Island Farm Agricultural Preservation Restriction. The project is a great partnership for the Brunnschweiler and Aragi families, the Land Trust and the Massachusetts Dept. of Agricultural Resources.

For more information or to contribute, contact the Sheffield Land Trust at 229-0234, shefland@bcn.net or [www.sheffieldland.org](http://www.sheffieldland.org).



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## FIRE LOG

### October

- 3 CO detector on 779 West Rd.
- 3 Fire alarm at Sheffield Plastics.
- 16 Search on mountain.
- 18 Fire alarm at Berkshire School.
- 25 Tractor fire on Boardman St.
- 25 Lawn mower fire in Ashley Falls.
- 27 Transformer fire on Main St.
- 29 Electrical wires down on Lime Kiln Rd.
- 29 Fire alarm at Berkshire School.
- 30 Fire alarm at Berkshire School.

### November

- 1 Mutual aid to Salisbury, CT, Fire Dept.
- 1 CO detector on Ivy Trail.
- 2 Fire alarm on North Main St.
- 4 Mutual aid to N. Canaan, CT, Fire Dept.
- 11 Auto accident on Guilden Hollow Rd.
- 11 Auto accident on Cooper Hill Rd.
- 20 Auto accident on Rt.7/West Stahl Rd.
- 23 Assist Police Dept. on Dewey Way.
- 25 Mutual aid to Great Barrington Fire Dept.
- 27 Mutual aid to Egremont Fire Dept.
- 27 Lost hiker on Race Brook trail.

### December

- 1 Fire alarm on Berkshire School Rd.
- 1 Fire alarm at Berkshire School.
- 4 Mutual aid to Great Barrington Fire Dept.
- 5 Mutual aid to Alford Fire Dept.
- 11 Mutual aid to Great Barrington Fire Dept.
- 11 Fire alarm on Bow Wow Rd.
- 15 Fire alarm in the Sheffield Block, Main St.
- 18 Car accident on Silver St.



**School award.** Gabriella Makuc cuts the cake celebrating her award as her family looks on. Gabriella was chosen as the 2011 recipient of the Massachusetts Assoc. of School Superintendents' Award for Academic Excellence. The presentation by Dr. Michael Singleton, school superintendent, took place at the Dec. 15 meeting of the School Committee for the Southern Berkshire Regional School District.



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# Calendar Page

## January

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- 13 "What's It" Night (p. 20)
- 16 MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY
- 19 Disabilities Commission speaker series (p. 17)
- 20 How to use e-books (p. 8)
- 27 Book discussion at Library (p. 8)

## February

- 1 Property taxes due (p. 16)
- 2 Book club at Library (p. 8)
- 4 Dewey Hall Folk Music (p. 6)
- 15 **Deadline for the MARCH/APRIL Sheffield Times**
- 14 VALENTINE'S DAY
- 20 PRESIDENT'S DAY
- 26 Land Trust Winter Lecture (p. 21)

## March

- 1 Book club at Library (p. 8)
- 3 Dewey Hall Folk Music (p. 6)
- 6 Presidential Primary (p. 16)
- 6 Book discussion at Library (p. 8)
- 11 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS
- 20 FIRST DAY OF SPRING
- 23 Last day to obtain town-office nomination papers (p. 16)
- 26 Last day to return town-office nomination papers (p. 16)

See also the listings for Bartholomew's Cobble (p. 18)  
and Kiwanis (p. 19)

Buy local, read local!  
Please contribute!

## ONGOING CALENDAR ITEMS

Meetings or events that occur less than weekly are noted with a week number – i.e. "1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>" indicates meetings are on the first and third times that day occurs in the month. \* indicates appointment needed.

*Meals on Wheels, Mon-Fri, except holidays*

### Mondays:

*Building Inspector, Town Hall, 7am-1pm*  
*Board of Selectmen, Town Hall, 7pm, 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>*  
*Conservation Commission, Town Hall, 7pm, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> only for winter)*  
*Board of Health, Town Hall, 7pm, 2<sup>nd</sup>*  
*Food Assistance Program, Old Parish Church, 9-10:30am*  
*\* Foot care clinic, Senior Center, 1<sup>st</sup>*

### Tuesdays:

*Building Inspector, 7am-1pm*  
*Ashley Falls Historic District Commission, Town Hall, 6:30pm, 2<sup>nd</sup>*  
*Industrial Development Commission, Town Hall, 7:30pm, last*  
*Senior Center physical fitness, 9am*  
*Children's Story Hour, Library, 10am*  
*Senior Center "Lawn Chair Movie," 11:30am*  
*Kiwanis Club, The Bridge Restaurant, 6:30pm*

### Wednesdays:

*Senior Center Knitting Group, 3pm, 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*Planning Board, Town Hall, 7pm, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> (4<sup>th</sup> only for summer)*

### Thursdays:

*Building Inspector, 11am-6 pm*  
*Senior Center physical fitness, 9am*  
*Third Thursday Luncheon, Senior Center, noon*  
*\* Hearing Testing available, Senior Center, 3<sup>rd</sup>*  
*Breaking Bread Kitchen, American Legion Hall, 5pm*

### Fridays

*Building Inspector, 11am-4pm*  
*Council on Aging, 9:30am, as needed*  
*Commission on Disabilities, Library, 3:30pm 3<sup>rd</sup>*

### Saturdays:

*Dewey Hall Folk Music Series, 8pm, 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*Senior Center Knitting Group, 11am, 3<sup>rd</sup>*

### Sundays:

*Men's Group, Old Parish, 7:45am, 2<sup>nd</sup>*

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**All our roads lead to Sheffield.**

**Happy New Year  
to our neighbors and friends.**

**BERKSHIRE SCHOOL**